

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CASABL 00452 061742Z

46

ACTION AF-18

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2806

INFO AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION GENEVA

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AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L CASABLANCA 452

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, MO, XA

SUBJECT: IRVING BROWN VISIT TO MOROCCO

1. SUMMARY: AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE IRVING BROWN, ACCOMPANIED BY AALC DIRECTOR O'FARRELL, VISITED MOROCCO MAY 31-JUNE 4 FOR FIRST TIME IN OVER TWO YEARS. BROWN, WHO WELL KNOWN AND LIKED BY UMT LEADERS SINCE EARLY 1950'S SUCCESSFULLY RENEWED FRIENDSHIPS BUT FOUND UMT'S INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL POSITION ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED. END SUMMARY

2. IRVING BROWN, FORMER DIRECTOR AFRO-AMERICAN LABOR CENTER AND NOW AFL-CIO EUROPEAN REPRESENTATIVE, VISITED MOROCCO MAY 31-JUNE 4. BECAUSE OF HIS EARLY SUPPORT FOR MOROCCAN NATIONALPAT AND TRADE UNION MOVEMENTS (AND IS SPITE OF HIS POLITICAL BELIEFS) BROWN, MORE THAN ANY OTHER AMERICAN, ENJOYS FRIENDSHIP AND CONFIDENCE OF UNION MAROCAINE DU TRAVAIL (UMT) SECGEN MAHJOUB BEN SEDDIK. FREQUENT VISITS FROM BROWN OVER LAST TWO DECADES HAVE PROVIDED UMT ALL TOO RARE CONTACT WITH AMERICAN TRADE UNION MOVEMENT, AND BROWN'S ABSENCE DURING LAST TWO YEARS HAD BEEN CONSPICUOUS.

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PAGE 02 CASABL 00452 061742Z

UMT LEADERSHIP, PLAINLY DELIGHTED AT VISIT, PROVIDED WARM

HOSPITALITY INCLUDING SERIES OF DINNERS AND QUICK TRIP
TO MARRAKECH.

3. ALTHOUGH AFL-CIO MAINTAINS NO OFFICIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH
THE SOMETIMES HOSTILE UMT, BROWN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY AALC
DIRECTOR PAT O'FARRELL. INRECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH LABOFF
BEN SEDDIK HAD INDICATED POSSIBLE WILLINGNESS COOPERATE
WITH AALC IN TRAINING FIELD, BUT BY EVE OF VISIT HE HAD
REVERTED TO HIS USUAL HOSTILITY TOWARDS CENTER AS QUOTE
AGENT OF IMPERIALISM UNQUOTE. Q QUESTION OF
COOPERATION NEVER CAME UP, AND VISIT REMAINED ON LEVEL OF
PERSONAL CONTACT ONLY.

4. BROWN, WHO HAS TWENTY YEARS PERSPECTIVE ON THESE MATTERS,
FOUND BEN SEDDIK'S POSITION ON RELATIONS WITH THE US
ESSENTIALLY UNCHANGED. BEN SEDDIK'S VIEWS ON PAN AFRICAN
TRADE UNION AFFAIRS MAY HAVE MODERATED SOMEWHAT, HOWEVER,
AND HE APPEARS LESS HOSTILE TO AALC ACTIVITIES IN AFRICA
THAN PREVIOUSLY. BEN SEDDIK WENT SO FAR AS TO SUGGEST THAT
AALC CONSIDER CLOSER COOPERATION WITH THE ZAIRE TRADE
UNION MOVEMENT, WHICH HE VIEWS AS THE MOST VIABLE IN TROPICAL
AFRICA.

5. COMMENT: WHILE WE ARE A LITTLE DISAPPOINTED BY THE ABSENCE
OF MOVEMENT TOWARDS A MORE INSTITUTIONALIZED RELATIONSHIP,
THE BROWN-OFARRELL VISIT WAS OF GREAT VALUE IN KEEPING UP
AMERICAN CONTACT AND DIALOGUE WITH THE UMT, ONE OF THE
KEY TRADE UNIONS IN AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD. WE HOPE TO
SEE BROWN AND OFARRELL BACK SOON.
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